

In February, 1815, while everything was preparing at Elba for the approaching departure of Napoleon, Murat applied to the (Court of Vienna for leave to march through the Austrian Provinces of Upper Italy an army directed on France. It was on the 26th of the same month that Bonaparte escaped from Elba. These two facts were necessarily connected together, for, in spite of Murat's extravagant ideas, he never could have entertained the expectation of obliging the King of France, by the mere force of arms, to acknowledge his continued possession of the throne of Naples. Since the return of Louis XVIII. the Cabinet of the Tuileries had never regarded Murat in any other light than as a usurper, and I know from good authority that the French Plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Vienna were, especially instructed to insist that the restoration of the throne of Naples in favor of the Bourbons of the Two Sicilies should be a consequence of the restoration of the throne of France. I also know that the proposition was firmly opposed on the part of Austria, who had always viewed with jealousy the occupation of three thrones of Europe by the single House of Bourbon.

According to information, for the authenticity of which I can vouch, the following were the plans which Napoleon conceived at Elba. Almost immediately after his arrival in France he was to order the Marshal on whom he could best rely to defend to the utmost the entrances to the French territory and the approaches to Paris, by pivoting on the triple line of fortresses which gird the north and east of France. Davoust was to arm the inhabitants of the suburbs, and to have, besides, 20,000 men of the National Guard at his disposal. Napoleon, not being aware, of the situation of the Allies, never supposed that they could concentrate their forces and march against him so suddenly if they did, He hoped to take them by surprise, and defeat their projects, by making Murat march upon Milan, and by stirring up insurrection in Italy, The Po being once in his hands, and Murat approaching the capital of Lorraine, Napoleon, with the corps of Buerke, Brune, Grouchy, and Massena, augmented by troops taken from the forced marches, to Lyons, was